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431 some day reciprocate and the old man again 'thanks' him with beer given in his honour. And this is an essential aspect of these gift exchanges. The most striking illustration is in respect of *mueyeulo* (bride-price). The *ikosi*, it is said, never completes *mueyeulo* payments (*mueyeulo a u file*); even in his old age he must still respond to the call for assistance from his relatives-in-law; and they in turn never cease bringing him beer. But whatever he gives falls into the *mueyeulo* and must be returned should the marriage be dissolved; the chain linking the parties into relations of reciprocity has snapped.

574 535 471 The *guha*, essentially a dance performed by the young men of one or more areas, provides the setting of an interesting interchange of goodwill and of commodities. The main object is undoubtedly recreational, and the main participators are not kin, but members of a territorial unit. The district head is not necessarily involved, except so far as he must know what goes on in his district. The old Lovedu word *lacho*, a musical entertainment, emphasizes its salient features: youths, blowing on reed flutes, dance round in a circle to the accompaniment of four drums beaten by girls. There is much preliminary practising under the leadership of the dance-master (*malaguana*), but in the actual performances leadership is not marked and changes continually as one performer after the other takes his stand in the centre of the ring of dancers. The artistic aspect, the making of the sets of reeds, their tone compass, the rhythmic counterpoints and the various melodic and harmonic sequences of sound may be dismissed in a sentence: close by, one is reminded of the pealing of bells thrown into ever new combinations by complex steps and movements; at a distance one listens as if to an *ensemble* of brass instruments strongly supported by drums. We are concerned with the socio-economic aspects only.

171 A slight comparison with the Venda *matangwa*, a word also used by the Lovedu (*matagwa*), is instructive. A Venda creditor wishing to collect a debt calls the dancers, gives them some work (such as the building of a hut or the repairing of a fence), and sends them to the recalcitrant debtor. There they stay feeding at the expense of the debtor and of his neighbours until the debtor pays. But the beast that the debtor pays is slaughtered and consumed by the performers, the creditor receiving only a small part. Apart from using the *matangwa* to enforce payment by debtors, the Venda also send such dancers to express sympathy when there has been a death and in that case there is a return visit to get back the beast slaughtered. It has also other uses not relevant to our present purpose.

574 535 431 Among the Lovedu the *guha* is somewhat different. Private individuals send it to friends or relatives to express sympathy or to notify a death as well as to celebrate the occasion of the latter's marriage or setting up a new home; and there are special rules for each kind of *guha*. The *guha* of condolence, for instance, lasts one day, drums are not allowed if the deceased is of a foreign tribe, and refusal of the entertainment is impossible. Generally speaking, a *guha* entails special food and lodging arrangements, food for the visitors being collected from households in the district which also provides sleeping quarters. The old rules designed

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queens. And in the system these wives, after a period of training at the royal court, were re-allocated to district heads and royal relatives.

The system is not unknown elsewhere. Among the Shona, as we are told by Bullock, when one tribe conquered another, the survivors were incorporated by being given wives; in time of famine, tribes sometimes exchanged their daughters for food; and some of the Mambo handed their wives to their bodyguard, who gave in return, not bride-price, but faithful service. The Rozwi appear to have maintained their dominance over subjected chiefs, not by deposing them, but by assisting in their ceremonial appointment and the superimposition of the cult of Mwari, the high god, which had its priesthood and could withhold rain. This cluster of institutions is interesting to us because the Lovedu came from these parts and have retained some of their features. Lovedu district heads give 'tributary' wives to the queen in exchange for rain and these wives are re-allocated to important men. But the form and setting of the institution has changed; the circulation of wives, drawn into the network of the political and social scheme, subserves the purposes of the Lovedu cultural configuration.

By singling out for brief consideration the complex of royal institutions and of districts, we are giving prominence to certain aspects of the political structure. That is unavoidable in a generalized account, which must largely ignore the variations among the 140 districts (of which fifty are on European-owned land). We have often referred to cultural divergences and the tolerance towards them. In the autonomous districts they are very much in evidence. You may be told over and over again there is no such thing as ancestors represented by snakes, except among the possessed and in their cult; and the conception seems alien to a religion in which ancestors are not reincarnated in an animal, but animals may be dedicated to ancestors. Yet suddenly one day you may find that the sacred object (thagula) of a head of a district, such as Rekile, is a snake. The lack of uniformity and the tolerance of almost contradictory customs may give the impression of ineffective political institutions. Conformity there must be in the interests of economy and solidarity, but the conformity need not be that of a regimented society such as ours. As to the royal cluster of institutions, we shall consider those maintaining the confidence of the people in the powers of the queen, and those converting tributes of wives into the visible links of the social organization. The elaboration of the royal institutions must not, however, obscure the essential humanity of the queen; we do not deal with the latter, but we must remember that it is a factor of great importance in the dynamics of these institutions.

In 140 years there have been only three queens, and Mujaji III, after having already ruled for over forty-three years, is still physically strong and is said never to have had a day's illness. The Lovedu attach little importance to the longevity of their queens, who in other tribes have been immortalized. In the north, whence the Lovedu came, kings ruled only for brief periods; they were not allowed to become old or decrepit, lest the kingdom suffer; and either they committed suicide or they were killed. Don Santos, writing in 1607, records that the kings of

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Sotala had formerly to take poison when disaster or a natural defect fell upon them. Among the Lovedu, tradition decrees that the queen shall have no physical defect and must poison herself, not when she is old, but at the end of the fourth initiation (*vudigo*) of her reign. The emergence of physical imperfections and the holding of the fourth *vudigo* cannot both determine the date of suicide. In fact, no reign has been cut short because of bodily defects, though the conception of the relation survives. The queen is believed to be immune from disease and it is thought that her first will be her last illness; it is even said that Mujaji III's elder uterine brother was excluded from the throne because of his weak ankles. At the same time, not kings, but queens are wanted, there are no tests of physical fitness as are recorded for tribes in the north, and in the legends of the Lovedu and of tribes which, following the Lovedu, have ritual suicide, physical defects do not figure as a theme. In this complex, heirs to the throne have been disqualified or chiefs have been deposed because of inability to make rain, disobedience to their sovereign, or adultery with his wives. Among the Mamaila, a branch of the Lovedu, one chief is said to have become a cripple because he forced open the door which magically yields to the touch of the true heir, and the Nemesis that overtook him is attributed to his sin, not to his defect. Impotence disqualifies in the north, but Mujaji II was barren and, in the pattern as adopted in some tribes, such as the Khaha of Maake, barrenness of the queen is expected; for, as the queen may have no official husband, it is a virtue to have no children. That conception is not accepted by the Lovedu, for Mujaji II's barrenness was a source of sadness and strife and every effort was made to cure her. Physical fitness is an aspect of the perfection and divinity of the queen, but it has no practical relation to the right of succession.

The relation between the length of a reign and the initiations is far more obscure. In many tribes where ritual suicide is enjoined (Thavina, Khaha, Uirwa), the number of 'schools' is said to be seven. The 'schools' are there held more frequently, and possibly there is some connexion with the number of sacred drums (*digoma*), for the Khaha have seven and the Lovedu four. The chief's life, as we have seen, is intimately bound up with the drums; both drums and 'schools' are great *digoma*, objects or activities in which power is concentrated. Power is also concentrated in *dithugula*, a category of objects chiefly associated with the gods. The distinction is not that between magic and religion; the *digoma* and *dithugula* appear to belong to different cultural complexes. The one was characterized, we may suppose, by 'schools', drums, and cults linked up with national calendric observances, dramatization of the crises in life, and the sanctity and power of the chief; the other, by sacred beads, shrines, reincarnation of ancestors in dedicated animals, and ritual suicide of the chief. In the process of merging, the great *digoma* were, we suggest, grafted on to the royal institutions and brought into relation with the life as well as the death of the chief. This is little more than speculation, for it is difficult to isolate the oldest cultural substrata and their distinctive patterns.

The rule about physical fitness is now merely an ideal and, similarly,

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one might call the Lobedu culture complex, though it is not at all clear what the origin of its differentiating features is. In its most typical form this culture is found among the Lobedu of Modjadji, the Letswalo and the Khaba. To the north-west it merges into the not very different Venda culture complex; to the south, Pedi influences, noticeable on the edge of the Drakensberg, become increasingly apparent among the Mahlo and eventually predominate among the Baba Mamidja on the banks of the Olifants. In the east, the Phalaborwa have developed specialized responses to the challenge of an arid bushveld environment; while to the west along the escarpment, Tokwa influences are so marked that the Sekhopo branch of the Lobedu, who live there, differ more from the Lobedu of Modjadji than do the unrelated Khaba and Letswalo.[1] These gradations are to some extent hidden by the fact that owing to the mixed composition of every tribe differences in custom in any single tribe are often as great as differences from one tribe to another. The nature of this Lowveld cultural pattern, those features peculiar to this area and those held in common with other tribes, will best be shown by a short account in general terms of various aspects of the social and economic organization of these tribes.

General Aspects of the Lowveld Village. The Lowveld village, nestling among the trees and shrubs of the surrounding bushveld vegetation, which usually provides a natural fence, differs in general aspect from that of the Highveld tribes with its well-smeared, high-walled courtyards. While there is a tendency in the south, among Narene of Segororo and to a lesser extent among Thabina and Maake's Khaba, for villages to straggle in lines along the hill-sides, there is nowhere any sign of the large agglomerations of dwellings so typical of the Tswana town and present in an attenuated form also among Tokwa of the Highveld. The Lowveld village is not large, consisting generally of from two to twenty huts; but there is evidence that when times were more unsettled and the need for protection kept

[1] The Birwa who live partly in the Lowveld, partly in the Highveld, probably belong to the Lobedu culture complex. Though their culture differs in many respects from that of the Lowveld tribes there are also marked similarities, such as ritual suicide of the chief.

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in effective check the tendency for people to move away after every quarrel or accusation of witchcraft, villages were not only appreciably larger than to-day but also somewhat differently arranged, with both courtyard and cattle-kraal in the centre. Wherever possible the Sotho build on mountains, which are covered with a rich, loamy soil well suited to cultivation, are less fever-ridden than the valleys, and in the old days afforded better protection against enemies. Indeed, it is not until recent times that the valleys have been opened up even for agriculture. Within the village each married woman generally has two huts, kitchen- and sleeping-hut, while one or more fenced-in sections near the hedge are devoted to the storage of mealies on the cob and beer-making activities.

TRIBAL ECONOMY. The tribes of the Lowveld are predominantly agricultural, possessing on the whole few cattle. Milk, which many adults find nauseating, plays a very minor part in their diet, milk taboos are unknown while the meat sacrifice is rare, beer taking its place. As among Venda and the Sotho of the Highveld, women are not as strictly excluded from contact with cattle as among the Nguni; not only is it common for girls to herd cattle in the absence of boys in town or at the circumcision school, but many women also possess cattle in their own right. While it would be impossible here to give a full account of Lowveld agriculture, it is of interest to enumerate some of its more salient aspects. Men take a considerable part in agricultural activities, every married man having one large field for which he is responsible. But while women plant every kind of crop, men grow and reap only mealies, grain crops, and sugar-cane; pumpkins, beans, ground- and monkey-nuts, &c., are considered as purely a woman's concern. In our area, as elsewhere, these crops are mostly planted together in the same field, mealies predominating in some parts, kaffir-corn or millet being the chief crop in others. Partly as a result of congestion and partly in order to take advantage of differential climatic conditions as between mountain and valley, fields of any one family are generally very widely scattered, being sometimes as much as ten miles apart. Recognition of the food value of various wild fruit trees, such as the morula and wild fig, is shown by the fines attached to cutting them without special permission. An interesting feature

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241 of the agriculture of the more mountainous portions of the Lowveld is the use of terraces, or rather contour walls of stone, for there is no levelling of the ground in between, to prevent excessive washing away of soil. With the absence of men in the towns and the introduction of the plough with subsequent preference for valley cultivation, these contour walls are tending to fall into disuse.

162 Division of labour between the sexes is the same here as among
• [171] Venda and the Highveld tribes of the Northern Transvaal. While care of cattle is the province of men and agricultural work is done by both sexes, cooking and housekeeping is confined to women. Men are responsible for the erection of storage receptacles, renewal of pantry and village enclosures and the lion's share in hut-building, including thatching, for women do only plastering of walls and preparation of the floor. The crafts confined to men are ironwork, work in skin, and all wood-work such as the manufacture of drums, platters, spoons, milk pails, stamping blocks, porridge twirlers, and flat winnowing baskets. Pottery is confined to women, but weaving and basketry (other than the making of winnowing baskets) is done by both sexes.

642 Political Organization and Position of the Chief. The most
643 outstanding features of the Lobedu culture complex, which clearly differentiate the Lowveld tribes from their neighbours to the south and west, are ritual suicide of the chief and the possibility of women ruling in their own right.[1] Among the Lobedu the chief reigns for a period of four circumcision schools, each 'school' being separated from the previous one by a period of almost ten years, and then has to drink poison and die. The institution can hardly continue when its supporting background of ritual and belief is crumbling, but it has survived to this day; the immediate predecessors of the present Lobedu and Letswalo rulers died unnatural deaths in the traditional manner, Modjadji II in 1894 and Mamathola in 1905. There is in this area no conscious belief that growth of the crops, welfare of the cattle,

[184] [1] These two features occur together in the most important tribes of the Lowveld such as the Lobedu, Khaha, Narene, Thabina. The only tribes to whom this institution is foreign are the Phalaborwa and Tsubye and the two Venda tribes of Moila and Tswale. Sekhopo and Radwadu, sections of the Balobedu, broke away when the first woman succeeded and themselves have only men rulers.

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643 789 766 carriages, abortions, and people dying of any severe coughing illness prevent rain from falling unless specially buried in wet soil is found with variations all over the Lowveld, among Sotho and Shangana-Tonga alike.

643 588 644 [557] Women rulers have their 'wives' just as though they were men, and a peculiar feature of Lobedu culture is the large number of wives or *batlhanesi* of the queen. Every Lobedu induna sends a daughter to be a *mothanesi* of the queen, as do also any of the nobility who wish to be on a good footing with her; and these, together with girls sent by foreign tribes as gifts for rain, form a large harem. *Batlhanesi* of the chief occupy an honoured position at the Head Kraal, have, on the whole, less work than ordinary women and are a source of honour to their family who through them become privileged to call the queen their *tsute*—bridegroom or son-in-law. They may be given in marriage to relatives of the queen or to commoners, in which case the peculiar situation arises of their children preferring [551] to call themselves sons and daughters of the queen, using the surname Modjadji, to taking the lineage name of their father. Often, however, the *batlhanesi* remain with the queen, the ideal being to remain virgin for some years, after which they are given their own hut in the village and permission to have children. [565] A *mothanesi* of noble birth ranks higher than a commoner and can even bear the heir to the throne when the queen herself is barren. [184] Other Lowveld chiefs do not receive daughters from their headmen, though the Khaba and Letswalo used to accept girls from foreign chiefs for rain as did the Lobedu. These women became a link and source of friendship between the two tribes and, especially among Lobedu, played a real part in the gradual growth and influence of the tribe. Even the great Ngungunyane once sent women to Modjadji for rain, and there are, to-day still, at her head kraal sisters and daughters of important chiefs in the Northern Transvaal, though money and cattle have now been substituted for women in rain transactions.

643 • [771] The legal heir to the throne is, in the Lowveld, the eldest son of the chief wife, who should always be the daughter of the chief's mother's brother. The cattle for this marriage are not, as among the Pedi and one or two Highveld tribes, contributed by all the headmen, nor are the fires in the country extinguished on the occasion of the marriage.

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881 794 established. Sometimes a school in which boys receive cuts on either side of the face, it is associated also with rain ritual and with the *dzimu* or ancestral spirits who come to earth and speak in a whistling, wailing manner.

794 An interesting feature of the Northern Transvaal is the tendency for private people, strangers from tribes who have certain schools, to set up schools with the permission of the chiefs in areas where they are not known. People are always willing to join them, and they are a source of great profit to the holder. Thus the Dikxale of the High-veld have no *komana*; but a Narene man who has come to live in the area has brought *komana* drums and holds schools to which many Dikxale go.

836 837 Sex Morality and Marriage. Sex morality among Lowveld tribes conforms to the general pattern found over South Africa in having pre-marital sex intercourse as an institution fully approved of by society as long as no children are born. Furthermore, adultery, which is an everyday occurrence, is not looked upon as serious in any way unless the parties are indiscreet and are discovered. Widows, especially, are recognized as easy prey to male advances even though they have been inherited by the husband's brother. The fine attached [684] to adultery is usually one head of cattle; but the general laxness is better illustrated in the attitude found among the Narene, where there is no fine attached to adultery, though a man caught in the act will [695] send something to the husband to beg pardon. In court, the bare word of a woman accusing a man of adultery is always accepted. [684] Seduction of a young girl is a much more serious offence than adultery, with the correspondingly higher fine attached to it of two head of cattle and a goat, and realization that marriage is much more than a sexual relationship between the parties concerned is shown in the fact that far from trying to promote marriage between the parties concerned, the parents of the girl will refuse any alliance with a boy whose people they do not consider suitable.

582 [771] Like all Sotho peoples, the Lowveld tribes have the institution of preferred marriage with certain relatives, in contrast to the Zulu–Xhosa with whom marriage with any related person is taboo. Fully 40 per cent. of all marriages are, in our Lowveld area, with the

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RELIGION. In common with the other Bantu tribes of South Africa, the people of the Lowveld have ancestor worship. The form which it takes here bears many resemblances to that found among the Venda and also to that of the Shangana-Tonga though it differs from both in a number of ways. Characteristic of the religion of Lowveld tribes are the predominance of the beer offering to the almost complete exclusion of the blood sacrifice, the use of shrines and dedicated goats or cattle, the powers attributed to old beads and other objects once in the possession of the ancestors, the prominent part played by women, the virtual equality of ancestors on the mother's and father's side and the cult of the *dzjaw* in which old men deceive women and the uninitiated by acting the part of ancestors supposed to be returning to the village after certain ceremonies.

The creator-god, to whom however no worship is directed, is known as Khudrwane, use of the term *Modimo* in this sense being in the Lowveld probably a Christian innovation. Belief in a sky-god, such as that of the south-eastern tribes, is absent, while spirits such as the mountain and river spirits believed in by Venda, and Tikoloshe, Impundulu and other half-mythical creatures who play so important a role in the everyday life and beliefs of Pondo and Xhosa are quite unknown in the Lowveld. Instead, one finds the *dzjaw* or *dzozjaw*, ancestral spirits who come after sunset after important religious ceremonies in the royal family, during the *komana* drumming and sometimes, among Lobedu, at the installation of an important headman, and call in thin, wailing voices. Often they whistle out their own names or throw stones at the village, scolding people for having broken customs, till beer is brought to them and they are appeased. They are ancestors, yet they are only half-men with one leg and one arm instead of two;[1] they dwell in the sacred woods, and when they come no one is to leave the village, women and children shutting themselves up securely in their huts. The fact that the part is acted by a few old, trusted men is not known to many.

The sacred place at which offerings are made is not the cattle kraal

[1] Among Venda, *dzithusi* are thought to be mountain spirits with one leg, one arm, &c., the sight of whom brings death to the traveller. They have no connexion with ancestor worship and are said to be mostly of Sotho origin. This is clearly a borrowing.

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i.e., telling the medicine, without any set phraseology, what to do, is important. Day wizards are chiefly men and it is said that, owing to the facility of obtaining bad medicine in towns and from foreign tribes to-day, this type of witchcraft has greatly increased.

In everyday life, however, a person is called a witch, whatever methods he has used, and in an accusation of witchcraft there is never any discussion whether the culprit is a day or night wizard. Moreover, there is in the minds of ordinary people considerable confusion about the type of witchcraft associated with each class, and it is possible to live among Lowveld people a long time without coming upon these distinctions. The night wizard is thus in Evans-Pritchard's terminology the witch, the day wizard the sorcerer; and the great distinction between sorcery and legitimate magic lies not in method but in intention.

SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF BEER AND THE DANCE. It would be a mistake in discussing the main features of Lowveld society to leave out of count the social importance of beer and the use of the dance or *goka* as a social institution, though neither is confined to these tribes. Beer, apart from its religious value, plays a part in social and economic life. It is continually being carried from one group to another, acting as a bond between people and establishing friendly relations. In the Lowveld, in contrast to the Highveld, it is still of greater importance than money; while people may refuse to attend working parties for money, they will flock to one where beer is served. The *goka* is a dance in which women do the drumming while men playing reed pipes dance in a circle round the drums. It is, however, much more than a dance. It is an institution for maintaining friendship and reciprocity between groups, a way of showing sympathy on the death of a relative and the means by which subjects approach their chief for rain in time of drought. A *goka* is often sent by one chief to another in the Northern Transvaal.

SOME COMPARISONS BETWEEN LOBEDU CULTURE AND THAT OF OTHER AREAS. The Lobedu culture complex represents a close blending of two cultures, that of the Lobedu who came south from somewhere in Rhodesia when the empire of Monomotapa was breaking up, bringing

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with them the Sacred Kingship and other culture elements, and that of certain Sotho peoples, from whom, it would seem, came the cult of the sacred drums associated with *Asumana* ceremonies and the typical Lowveld form of *bwamu* and *lyale* schools. Since these latter traits are absent, as far as our knowledge goes, from the Sotho other than those of the Northern Transvaal, the question of their origin is difficult to solve. The tribes in the south of the Lobedu culture area include the Khaha or Koni who appear to be related in some way to the Pulana and Pai south of the Olifants River who, van Warmelo thinks, belong to a very old sub-stratum of Sotho that occupied the Eastern Transvaal and Swaziland before the advent of the Swazi proper. It may be that the drum cult and other culture elements belong to these people, but the problem awaits more intensive research into the culture of Pulana and Pai.

The relationship of the Lobedu culture to that of the Venda who also came from the north is a close one, both in language and culture. In material culture, religion, the part played by women in social and religious life, Venda and Lobedu are very close indeed. There are, however, a number of well-marked differences which preclude identification of Venda and Lobedu. Though the Venda chief was hedged in with ceremonial in the old days, ritual suicide of the chief, the outstanding feature of the Lobedu, is quite unknown to them; no women chiefs are allowed among the Venda though there are women heads of districts; the custom whereby district heads send daughters to be wives of the chief is not found among them nor are disputed successions settled by the ordeal of opening the door. Venda initiation schools such as Domba and Thondo differ widely from those of the Lobedu; they have no *Asumana* drum cult, no *dajaw* or impersonation of ancestral spirits associated with their religion. On the other hand, the divining bowl so typical of Venda magic and the weaving of *matila* cloth are quite unknown to the Lobedu.

The similarities between the Lowveld tribes forming the Lobedu complex and the Sotho tribes of the Northern Transvaal Highveld are not as great as those between Venda and Lowveld tribes. Among the culture elements held in common are the general system of agriculture and division of labour, including bird-scaring by magical means; the same initiation schools with minor modifications are

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common to both; the *goba* as a social institution and the *komana* sacred drum cult with accompanying *dipate*. The position of women is relatively high, though not as high as among Lowveld and Venda tribes; women may own cattle, are not as strictly excluded from contact with the cattle as among Nguni, while father's and mother's sides of the family are of almost equal importance.

Cultural differences between Highveld and Lowveld are evident in the general aspect of villages, which cluster together in the Highveld with high-walled and well-smeared courtyards, as well as in everyday pursuits. The Highveld woman stamps, generally in a sitting position in a hole in the hut floor,[1] threshes her corn by means of sticks instead of stampers and grinds her tobacco on a potsherd instead of with a stick in a serrated earthen pot, as do Venda and Lowveld tribes. The chief, whose chief wife is obtained with cattle contributed by every district headman in the tribe, is surrounded by no great ceremonial or secrecy; ritual suicide of the chief is unknown; the autocracy of the royal family is less pronounced than in the Lowveld; the custom of submitting in cases of disputed succession to the ordeal of the door is foreign to Highveld tribes, while women can never rule as chiefs or headmen except as regents for minor sons. In local government we find a tendency towards fewer and larger districts with correspondingly more powerful district heads. In law the ordeal is unknown; the elaborate Lowveld system of 'mothers' at court poorly developed; the interesting modern development of dealing with witchcraft by a system of wagers and use of the Shangana *nukane* absent. Possession, ubiquitous in the Lowveld, is hardly present on the Highveld, while the cult of the ancestors has in most parts either disappeared or lost much of its meaning. One gets the impression that, owing perhaps to a difference in attitude towards and method of dealing with wizards in the old days, witchcraft has not the same hold on the minds of the people as in the Lowveld. Longer and closer contact with Europeans and the strong hold of Christianity have led on the Highveld to greater breakdown of tribal custom than is found in the Lowveld.

The nature of the culture we have been describing will perhaps be

[1] This difference is a modern one, due to adoption by Lowveld Sotho of the Shangana-Tonga wooden stamping-block.

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thrown into clearer relief if we compare it with the more salient features of that of the South-eastern tribes, especially the Zulu-Xhosa, for, though differing from one another, Venda and Highveld and Lowveld tribes fall into line as opposed to the culture of South-eastern tribes. The virtual equality in social life and religion of father's and mother's side of the family and the relatively high position of women stand in contrast to the strongly patrilineal Zulu-Xhosa where wife-beating is said to be more common than among Sotho, where women are regarded as strangers in their husband's village, have all their lives to observe strict rules of *hlonipha* towards their husband's people, and are excluded to a greater extent than Sotho women from political and religious rites. For a woman to marry a woman, as among Lowveld Sotho, is unknown to the South-eastern Bantu; nor have they anything corresponding to the great influence and power wielded by women in the households of their brothers, in dividing out the inheritance on the death of the head of the household and in all religious matters affecting the family.

All forms of preferential marriage other than sororate and levirate are absent from Zulu-Xhosa society where the *ukuhlobola* custom, whereby a girl can present herself for marriage at the kraal of a man she loves, gives girls somewhat greater freedom of choice than is enjoyed by Sotho girls. Courting in parties dressed up in their best, which takes up so much of the time of every young man among Nguni and Shangana-Tonga has no counterpart in Sotho society where, for the most part, husband and wife are 'born for' one another, while the use of love magic with its associated hysteria known as *ukukayisa* in girls of the South-eastern tribes is completely absent among the Sotho of the Northern Transvaal. Indeed, love magic is looked upon as a form of witchcraft and punished as such.

The private nature of the First-fruit ceremonies among Sotho of the Northern Transvaal in which strengthening and seclusion of the chief play no part whatever stands in strong contrast to the elaborate public eating of the first-fruits among Zulu-Xhosa which has a military character associated with the strengthening of the army unknown among Sotho. Initiation into adult life among the Zulu-Xhosa includes generally a puberty ceremony for boys which is not found in the Northern Transvaal, while the *Asomana* and *Isuwara* for boys and

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the *lyale* for girls are entirely absent in the South-eastern tribes. Even the circumcision school, where it is present among Nguni, differs very greatly from that held among Sotho. In political organization, female succession and ritual suicide found in the Lowveld, though not among other tribes of the Northern Transvaal, are absent also from Zulu-Xhosa culture.

Ancestor worship among Zulu-Xhosa and Sotho, though fundamentally similar in meaning and function, differs considerably in its practice, the shrines of the Northern Transvaal, the importance of the beer offering as opposed to the blood sacrifice of the Zulu-Xhosa, the prominent part played by the father's sister as priestess, the importance attached to ancestors on the mother's side and the whole ritual of the sacred drums being foreign to Zulu-Xhosa. Nor is there any counterpart of the Zulu-Xhosa sky-god among the Sotho. Similarly the doctor, having essentially the same functions in the two societies, differs in Sotho society in his initiation, in methods employed for divining, in his relation to the ancestors.

In Nguni society there is a recognized pattern of expression for the mentally unbalanced and for certain forms of neurosis and hysteria. It is common for women to believe that they have been visited by and had intercourse with *tikoloshe*, the water dwarf; hysteria in girls is of frequent occurrence and is thought to be caused by love-magic; many people other than those who complete their training as doctors are thought to be *thwasa-ing*, run amok at night, wander for days in the veld or enter pools in search of a snake. In this manner many mentally unbalanced people have their recognized place in Nguni society. Among the Sotho, on the other hand, hysteria in girls is infrequent and not associated with love-magic and the whole system of *thwasa* prior to becoming a doctor unknown. In the Lowveld, the new and foreign cult of possession can be said to be similar but much too stereotyped to fulfil quite the same function. Might it be that there is definite maladjustment associated with these South-eastern practices not found among the Sotho, or is their existence merely a variant pattern of culture reflecting no basic difference?

The military character and warlike proclivities of the South-eastern Bantu who bred Chaka, the Black Napoleon, and for a hundred years held the white man in check on the Eastern province frontier

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are conspicuously absent from the tribes of the Northern Transvaal. Military organization is interwoven with many aspects of Nguni life and has left its stamp upon the people. Their age organization, much stronger and stricter than that of the Sotho, has by its association with the regimental system a military character; enrolment into a regiment is an important step in the life of each individual; strengthening of the army forms an important part of the yearly first-fruit ceremonies, while the Zulu even had military villages in which the men spent much of their time. All this is absent from the Lowveld where war never involved more than one or two regiments in what was little more than skirmishes for cattle, and the chief weapons, the bow and arrow, supplemented by spear and battle-axe, made fighting at close quarters unusual.

The South-eastern tribes, as also the Shangana–Tonga, have a much greater sense of display than is found among Sotho generally. To the young Zulu who spends his days courting the girls, dress and general appearance have an absorbing interest that is not found among northern Sotho; the beautiful regimental dress of Zulu and Swazi has no Sotho counterpart; doctors do not dress up to distinguish themselves from others; the Sotho bride who goes to her husband's kraal fully covered in a blanket has little wedding finery; while Sotho dancing lacks the dramatic and spectacular qualities of Nguni dances. In Sotho culture there is no place for the *giya-ing*, jumping, and shouting one's own praises in public, that plays so prominent a part in Zulu society. Nor does song among the Sotho, who like all Bantu are musical, occupy quite the same important position as among Nguni, where every child has its lullaby, every wedding new songs specially composed for the occasion, and every sib its praise song.

The Shangana–Tonga of the Lowveld fall midway between the culture of Zulu–Xhosa and that of the Northern Transvaal Sotho. Cattle in their society play no greater part than among Sotho; they have no milk taboos; in their agriculture they hardly differ from the Sotho except in having had one or two different crops which they are said to have introduced among Sotho. They are not strongly patrilineal like Zulu–Xhosa, the mother's side of the family plays as important a part as among Sotho in social life and religion, but they have no female

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priestesses and their joking relationship between a man and his mother's brother is not found in Sotho society.

Like the Zulu–Xhosa, the Shangana–Tonga have no marriage with relatives, while they differ from both Zulu and Sotho in allowing inheritance of the mother's brother's wife. Women do not marry women in Shangana–Tonga society; their sexual rites associated with the moving of a village have no parallel elsewhere. The religious system of Shangana–Tonga resembles that of the Sotho more than it does the Zulu–Xhosa in the use of shrines and beer offerings, but the sacred drum cult is absent and the use of fowls in sacrifice has its parallel among southern Lowveld tribes only. Their smelling-out doctor, whose methods resemble those of the doctor in Zulu–Xhosa society, is not found among Sotho, but the ordinary bone-thrower hardly differs from the Sotho doctor either in methods or initiation. Of the northern Sotho initiation schools, only the *khoba* and circumcision school are found among Shangana–Tonga, while Shangana–Tonga love of display, manner of dancing and singing resembles that of the Zulu–Xhosa. The similarities between Shangana–Tonga and the Sotho of the Lowveld are to be accounted for more by common influences in the past than by recent borrowings, though there is a considerable amount of diffusion to-day. The Shangana–Tonga of the Northern Transvaal Lowveld are very mixed: one tribe, that of Muhlava, came originally from Zululand, settling in its present habitat after a sojourn in Portuguese East Africa; others, like that of Nwamitwa who belongs to the great Valoyi family, trace their origin to the Nyai country beyond the Limpopo whence they came southwards towards the Tonga.

Peaceful conditions, closer contacts between members of different tribes in the service of the white man, subjection to a uniform system of European law and administration which calls forth similar responses among different tribes, all are tending towards gradual elimination of marked tribal differences and greater uniformity in tribal custom and conditions. To-day the old Venda initiation schools have all but died out while Sotho schools are rapidly spreading into Vendaland; Christian missions are exerting similar influences among different tribes; young men returning from work in towns bring home everywhere a changed attitude towards tribal customs and morality and a more

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individualistic outlook on life. With the inevitable disappearance in the near future of such distinctive elements as ritual suicide of the chief, marriage of women by women, and other characteristics typical of the culture of the Lowveld to-day, the Lobedu of the Lowveld tribes will tend to lose their individuality and become more and more like their neighbours.

ELLEN JENSEN KRIGE.

Résumé

LA PLACE DES SOTHO DU TRANSVAAL NORD-ORIENTAL DANS LE COMPLEXE DES BANTOUS DU SUD

Les tribus sotho habitant le Lowveld du Transvaal nord-oriental, bien que faisant partie d'un grand ensemble culturel, englobant tous les peuples de l'Afrique du Sud qui parlent le sotho, accusent cependant un certain nombre de caractères distinctifs parmi lesquels on peut citer le suicide rituel du chef, la reconnaissance des femmes comme souverain, un culte des tambours sacrés. Ces phénomènes n'existent pas dans les tribus voisines. Les principaux aspects de cette civilisation sont brièvement indiqués sous les titres de: économie tribale; organisation politique et situation du chef; rèves juridiques et tribunaux; familles et clans; éducation cérémonielle; mariage; religion et sorcellerie. L'étude se termine par des comparaisons; les différences constatées parmi les autres tribus bantoues du sud, en particulier le groupe Nguni, sont indiquées.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
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But the whole cycle of myths merely emphasizes in very general terms the importance of rain-making as a prerequisite of the claim to chieftainship and for the well-being of the tribe; it does not concern itself with justifying the validity of the various institutional arrangements that are the main support of the beliefs and values of the queen's mystical credentials.

Conception of the Natural Order

The Lovedu do not oppose man and nature. There are no explicit formulations of the nature of the universe, but a natural order inexorably going its ordained way is implicitly rejected in their conceptions. The assumption is that cosmic forces are controllable and, in fact, controlled at every turn by man for his own benefit. Since nature is of interest and importance only so far as it is or can be used by society, there is no such conception as a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. The order of nature is a controlled one. There are various ways in which man is able to use and control powers in nature—by *vuŋaga* (the evil aspect of which is *vulsi*), i.e. by the use of power concentrated in certain persons and objects; by appeal to the ancestor-gods upon whom are projected the powers that the child experiences in relation to its parents; through the mysteries of the *digoma* which are associated with initiation and the fertility cult; and through the divinity of the queen whose concern it is to control nature in the interests of the tribe as a whole. This idea of the control of nature by the chief on behalf of the tribe is not unique; it is common among the Bantu tribes of South Africa. But the Lovedu emphasis is on the divine origin and special affinity with nature of the queen herself, whereas in tribes such as the Zulu and Tsonga, where the mystical relation of the chief to his people and his powers over nature have to be achieved by magical strengthening on his accession and to be renewed periodically, it is largely by means of the magic of the royal regalia that the chief is able to exercise control. Among all, including Lovedu, one of the most important factors in the powers and position of the chief is the fact that he is the living representative of the long line of royal ancestors (tribal gods). There is considerable overlapping of these four categories among the Lovedu. Thus ancestors are kept satisfied and happy by a charm placed in their shrine; the queen controls rain not only through her divinity but also by means of medicines and charms and appeals to her ancestors who can prevent her from making rain. Let us consider these means for the control of nature in greater detail.

Vuŋaga (skilled use of power concentrated in persons and objects)

The forces of nature may be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects, animate and inanimate. The substances in which these attributes or powers (*maada*) reside are mainly *melimo* (medicines) or *mere* (plants). But the term medicines in this context has a wider connotation than the parallel term among us; it includes both medicine and magic, and is a medico-magical conceptual category which to the Lovedu is quite distinct

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The *gɔmana* drums are no longer used by the queen to appeal to the ancestors for rain, but she permits boys from the royal village to attend *gɔmana* initiation ceremonies held occasionally, with her permission, by an outsider. The *gɔmana* concept, despite the support it gives to the mystical attributes of the queen, appears to represent a conceptual pattern that is autonomous and more fully developed in some neighbouring tribes, where the moments of the agricultural year were signalized by the sounding of the drums which were thought to bring rain and fertility, to bless the crops and cattle, and to safeguard the country from disease and enemies. In some tribes today the cult is a recent innovation in the form of initiation schools managed by outsiders who have their own drums and *zwidajani* visitors from tribes where the cult is better known.

Evil and how to avoid it

It has been shown that the Lovedu conceive the order of nature as something essentially man-controlled through the power of medicine and magic (*vuŋaga*), through the ancestors, through the divinity and powers of the queen, and through the mysterious forces associated with *digɔma*. The seasons and the rain have to be established by the queen for the crops to prosper; the baby 'grows by medicines' which guard it from harm and sickness and imbue it with health and strength; adulthood is achieved through initiations and *digɔma*; and over and above all, there is the watchful care of the gods. The natural order accordingly can and must be manipulated by utilizing benevolent and nullifying malignant forces, in order to further man's good fortune or to prevent evil from befalling him.

The Lovedu have elaborated some interesting concepts of impersonal evil powers which are concentrations of forces brought about by certain concatenations of conditions or events. These concepts are found over a much wider area, but have received special emphasis among the Lovedu. To them the ultimate good is rain. Rain is regarded as not merely the material source of life and happiness and the physical basis of man's sense of security; it is also a symbol of spiritual well-being and a manifestation that the social order is operating smoothly. Hence coolness denotes a state of euphoria: man and matter to be in order and to function properly have to be kept cool; angry ancestors must be cooled by means of medicine; even witches can be cooled and so made to forget their evil purposes. On the other hand, heat as the antithesis of the main basis of man's security, the cooling, life-giving rain, is conceived as a destructive force leading to a state of dysphoria.

'Heat' is a concept suggested by the physical properties of heat; it may sometimes be sensed, for example, as an important factor in fever, one of the most prevalent illnesses. But actually its operation is inferred from conditions of which 'heat' is clearly the cause, such as droughts and the desiccation of the crops. Here the generation of heat is ascribed to the effect upon the earth of disturbances of the regular course of nature by the burial in it

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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Lobedu themselves. The society is remarkably egalitarian and there is no concentration of wealth in the hands of the ruling group. Nor would this be easy in a tribe in which the limited resources in property (in cattle) are used primarily for, and are constantly being converted into, marriage alliances.

Other distinctive features of the Lobedu are their marked agricultural bias; a fertility cult with sacred drums; masked dancing; ritual arrangements in ancestor worship (in the form of impersonation of the spirits, the predominance of beer offerings and the *phasa* rite of spurting water out of the mouth as an accompaniment to prayer) which link them more closely to the tribes to the north than to their southern Nguni and Sotho neighbours where the blood sacrifice and cattle cult are more clearly marked.

Agnatic Groupings

Despite the fact that they are ruled by a queen and that women can and do hold important political and religious positions the Lobedu are a patrilineal people in the sense that a man belongs to his father's lineage, property is inherited in the male line and marriage is patrilocal. The tribe is made up of a large number of different totemic groups, Lion, Elephant, Crocodile, Wild Pig, none of which, not even the royal Lobedu totem, is confined to the Lobedu tribe. All these totems are found in neighbouring tribes and many also in other parts of the Transvaal and elsewhere. A few groups have no totem (*motupo*) but designate themselves by their place of origin, e.g., *Mokhalaga*. Groups which have the same totem do not consider themselves related if they come from different places of origin. Elephant of Khalaga are thus unrelated to Elephant of Tsubye or Elephant of Thobolo. People sometimes swear by (*ana*) their totem and are supposed to but do not always abstain from eating it. The totemic name is useful only as a distinguishing mark; e.g., in divination the bones may indicate a person of the Elephant or Lion totem as responsible for illness or theft. Beyond this the *motupo* has little meaning and today many of the young people do not even use the term. The totemic group is not exogamous.

The lineage has no distinguishing name, the term *moloko* or